

The following excerpts from the WIA Final Rules describe what the Employment and Training Administration has said about One-Stops and their philosophy.

The cornerstone of the new workforce investment system is One-Stop service delivery which unifies numerous training, education and employment programs into a single, customer-friendly system in each community. The underlying notion of One-Stop is the coordination of programs, services and governance structures so that the customer has access to a seamless system of workforce investment services. We envision that a variety of programs could use common intake, case management and job development systems in order to take full advantage of the One-Stops' potential for efficiency and effectiveness. A wide range of services from a variety of training and employment programs will be available to meet the needs of employers and job seekers. The challenge in making One-Stop live up to its potential is to make sure that the State and Local Boards can effectively coordinate and collaborate with the network of other service agencies, including TANF agencies, transportation agencies and providers, metropolitan planning organizations, child care agencies, nonprofit and community partners, and the broad range of partners who work with youth.

The WIA system is intended to be customer-focused, to help Americans access the tools they need to manage their careers through information and high quality services, and to help U.S. companies find skilled workers. WIA embodies seven key principles:

- Streamlining services through better integration at the street level in the One-Stop delivery system. Programs and providers will co-locate, coordinate and integrate activities and information, so that the system as a whole is coherent and accessible for individuals and businesses alike.
- Empowering customers in several ways. First, eligible adults are given financial power to use Individual Training Accounts at qualified institutions. Second, customers are empowered with greater levels of information and guidance, through a system of consumer reports providing key information on the performance outcomes of training and education providers. Third, customers are empowered through the advice, guidance, and support available through the One-Stop system, and the activities of One-Stop partners.
- Universal access. Any individual will have access to the One-Stop system and to core employment-related services.
- Increased accountability. The goal of the Act is to increase employment, retention, and earnings of participants, and in doing so, improve the quality of the workforce to sustain economic growth, enhance productivity and competitiveness, and reduce welfare dependency.
- Strong role for local workforce investment boards and the private sector, with local, business-led boards acting as "boards of directors," focusing on strategic planning, policy development and oversight of the local workforce investment system.

- State and local flexibility. States and localities have increased flexibility, with significant authority reserved for the Governor and chief elected officials, to build on existing reforms in order to implement innovative and comprehensive workforce investment systems tailored to meet the particular needs of local and regional labor markets.
- Improved youth programs linked more closely to local labor market needs and community youth programs and services, and with strong connections between academic and occupational learning.

We strongly believe that meaningful service planning cannot occur in the absence of effective assessment practices. We also believe there is no single correct approach to conducting assessment--it could be accomplished through the use of any number of formalized instruments, through structured interviews, or through a combination of processes developed at the local level. Further, assessments could be conducted by the One-Stop operator, by a partner agency, or by an outside organization on a contract basis. We expect that all partner agencies in the One-Stop, under any applicable State policies, will work to achieve consensus on the required components of the assessment system for the One-Stop system at any local level.

Because there are differences in the legal and program requirements among the various programs that might provide assessments, we do not think we can require that all assessments from any source be accepted as valid for WIA. We do, however, support efforts to create common intake systems and to share data across programs, thereby eliminating duplication of effort for program staff or customers. We also believe that assessments, evaluations, and service strategies developed by partner agencies for individuals are the product of that agency's unique expertise, and, therefore, should be given careful consideration. We encourage Local Boards and partner agencies to develop MOU's, with required and optional partners, that provide for procedures to ensure that, where appropriate, partner assessments will be accepted as valid for WIA, and WIA assessments will be accepted as valid for partner programs. Local Boards and partner programs should work together to develop assessment tools that will serve all partner interests. If necessary for WIA purposes, the One-Stop operator may choose to supplement assessment information provided from another agency. Given the limited funding available, it is important to avoid duplication of services.

One-Stop operators are responsible for administering the One-Stop centers and their role may range from simply coordinating service providers in the center to being the primary provider of services at the center. The role is determined by the chief elected official. One of the key reforms of WIA is streamlining customer services, and we would encourage local areas to examine methods through which they can determine eligibility for multiple programs at one time, through the coordination of One Stop Center partner activities.

We support the goal of developing common intake systems that can be used across a variety of programs and which eliminate redundancy of data collection and encourage States and local areas to develop such systems. We think that these activities are an essential part of the reforms envisioned by WIA and the creation of the One-Stop system and can lead to improved efficiency for program operators and better customer service. One Stop partners must work cooperatively to develop procedures, outlined in the MOU's, which will facilitate such streamlining.

MOU's are the primary means for coordinating the services of the One-Stop partners, they are the foundation of the entire workforce investment system. Section 662.260 provides that the One-Stop partners must use the One-Stop system to provide access to the partners' other activities and programs. This access must be described in the MOU. The MOU must describe the services to be provided through the One-Stop delivery system, the funding of the services and the operating costs of the system, the methods for referring individuals between the One-Stop operators and the partners and the duration of and procedures for amending the MOU. The MOU may also include other provisions about the operation of the One-Stop system that the parties consider appropriate.

Local Workforce Investment Boards should direct their region's provision of services. Section 661.120 provides authority to State and Local governments to establish their own policies, interpretations, guidelines and definitions relating to program operations under title I, as long as they are not inconsistent with WIA, these regulations, and Federal statutes and regulations governing One-Stop partner programs. The workforce investment system is a partnership between State, local and Federal stakeholders. One of WIA's key principles is that States and localities have increased authority to implement innovative workforce investment strategies to best serve the needs of the labor market.